A

SERMON

Preached before the

Honourable SOCIETY

Of the NATIVES of the

County of *KENT*,

November the 21th, 1700.

At St. *Mary-le-Bow*, *LONDON*.

By WILLIAM ASSHETON, *D. D.*
Rector of Beckenham *in* Kent; *and Chaplain to His* Grace *the Duke of* Ormond.

LONDON,
Printed for J. Back, (Bookseller to the said Honourable Society,) at the *Black Boy* on *London-Bridge*, 1700

N° 20

Dr. *ASSHETON*'s

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County of *KENT*,

November 21th, 1700.

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Veneris xxij. *die Novemb.* 1700.

IT is Ordered at a General Meeting of the Stewards for the Society of the County of *Kent*, That their hearty Thanks be given to Dr. *Assheton*, for his Sermon Preached on the 21th Instant, at St. *Mary le Bow*; and that He be desired to Print the same.

Edmund Riggs, Treasurer.

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To the much Honoured,

Mr. *Edmund Riggs*,	Mr. *John Bridgar*,
Capt *Tho. Robinſon*,	Mr. *Chriſtopher Denne*,
Mr. *John Bulfinch*,	Mr. *Edward Rooke*,
Mr. *David Dennis*,	Mr. *Henry Fuller*,
Mr. *John Back*,	Mr. *Ri. Whittingham*,
Mr. *Daniel Lane*,	Mr. *Richard Jones*.

STEWARDS of the *KENTISH-FEAST.*

Gentlemen,

THough *I am not a Native of your County, yet I heartily bleſs God, that I am an Inhabitant. For I do with the greateſt Thankfulneſs acknowledge, that my Lot is fallen in a pleaſant Place amongſt you: Where for many Years I have enjoyed the Satisfaction of a moſt comfortable Retirement. And being thus far yours, by*

Affection

Affection *and* Intereſt, *I could not think it decent to Diſpute your Commands, either for the Preaching or Publiſhing this ſhort Sermon.*

That it may, through God's Bleſſing, be Inſtrumental to promote thoſe Great and Noble Ends of your Yearly Meetings; viz. Friendſhip *and* Charity, *is the Prayer of*

Worthy Gentlemen,

Your moſt Humble,

and Faithful Servant,

William Aſſheton.

A SERMON

Preached at the

Kentish-Feast.

1 Cor. X. 31.

Whether therefore ye Eat or Drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.

THough the Particle *Therefore* doth plainly refer to the preceding Verses, and would thence oblige me to examine the Context; yet that I may the better contract my Discourse, (wherein I design to be very brief) I shall consider the words *Absolutely*, without any

dependance upon the preceding or following Verſes.

And I ſhall treat of them in this Method.

I. I ſhall examine the meaning of this Expreſſion, *Do all to the Glory of God.*

II. How can *Eating* and *Drinking*, with other common Paſſages of your Lives, *whatſoever ye do*, be done to God's Glory?

III. I ſhall make particular Application with reſpect to the Occaſion of this ſolemn Meeting.

I. What is it, to *do all to the Glory of God?* By the Glory of God we are to underſtand God himſelf; or the eminent Excellency of the Divine Nature, diſcovered and made known to us in thoſe Perfections, which we commonly call the Attributes of God: Such as his *Goodneſs*, his *Wiſdom*, his *Holineſs*, and his *Power*.

And we are ſaid to *do all to the Glory of God*. Not by making him more Glorious; or by adding to his Glory in any of theſe inſtances (which being Infinite can have nothing

nothing added to them) : But to *do all to the Glory of God*, it denotes no more than to publiſh and ſhew forth his Glory. *Sing Praiſes to the honour of his Name, make his Praiſe to be glorious : i. e.* Not make his Eſſence to be more glorious, than it is in it ſelf. But, make his Praiſe to be more and more glorious in the Eye and Eſteem of Men : That ſo *his Power, his Glory, and Mightineſs of his Kingdom, might be known unto Men.* And that Men might *aſcribe unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name.* Pſal. 66. 1. Pſal. 145. 12 Pſal. 96. 8.

In ſhort, When the *Wiſdom*, the *Power*, the *Juſtice*, the *Mercy* of God, with other his Divine Attributes, are confeſſed and acknowledged, are reverenced and adored by any of our Actions, then in Scripture Language, God is glorified : Or, ſuch a thing is done to the Glory of God.

II. How can *Eating* and *Drinking*, which are but natural Actions, be ſaid to be done to God's Glory ?

To this I Anſwer,

That the beſt Expedient we can propoſe,

to honour God in any Inſtance, is Obedience to his Commands.

When therefore we *Eat* and *Drink* in ſuch a manner, and with ſuch Circumſtances, and for ſuch Ends and Reaſons as God hath directed and appointed, then theſe and ſuch like natural Actions, are done to his Glory.

Now the known Ends of *Eating* and *Drinking* are theſe;

The nouriſhing of our Bodies; the refreſhing of our Spirits, and preſerving our Health. I ſay, *The refreſhing of our Spirits;* for doubtleſs Meats and Drinks are not only allowed us for Neceſſity; for the meer Support of Nature; but alſo for Satisfaction and Delight. God hath not only given Man Bread to ſtrengthen him, but Oyl to make him a chearful Countenance, and Wine to make glad his Heart.

But when Meats or Drinks are taken in ſuch Exceſs, that by oppreſſing Nature, *they hinder Digeſtion; drown and ſuffocate the Spirits; diſorder the Faculties; hinder the free uſe of Reaſon; and thereby make Men*

unfit

unfit for Buſineſs; and indiſpoſe them either for Civil or Religious Duties; then, and in ſuch Caſes, the uſe of them is irregular and unlawful; diſhonourable to God, and deſtructive to themſelves.

Theſe Exceſſes are ſeverely reflected upon in the Holy Scriptures.

Woe unto them that riſe up early in the Morning, that they may follow ſtrong Drink, that continue until Night, till Wine inflame them And the Harp, and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine are in their Feaſts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither conſider the operation of his Hands. Iſa. 5. 11, 12.

Wine and Muſick, and Feaſting, are doubtleſs very lawful: But if Men will ſo far indulge themſelves in theſe Enjoyments, as *not to regard the work of the Lord*; *i. e.* If they Eat and Drink to that Exceſs, ſo as to drown their Reaſon, ſo as not rightly to apprehend why theſe Refreſhments were given them: If they are ſo far Dozed, that they are uncapable to bleſs God for them, and to acknowledge his Bounty in the uſe of theſe, and all other their Mercies.

In

In ſhort, If they Eat and Drink only to gratifie their Appetites, not conſidering that their Health, their Strength, and their Time are to be improved to God's Glory, then there is a repeated *Woe* denounced againſt them, *v.* 22. *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong Drink.* Woe unto them that thus Glory in their Shame; or, that make their Shame their Glory.

'Tis therefore a very ſeaſonable Admonition of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Take heed*
Luke 21.34. *to your ſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with Surfetting and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life, and ſo that Day come upon you unawares.*
Rom. 13.13 *Let us walk honeſtly as in the Day; not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs.*

The which Caution of St. *Paul*, is elſewhere enforced with this awakening Sentence, *Drunkards ſhall not inherit the King-*
1 Cor. 6.10. *dom of God.*

But I ſhall not enlarge any further on ſo harſh and unpleaſing a Subject.

There

There are indeed great Irregularities committed in the World, and which ought ſharply to be reproved, but not fit to be mentioned in this Place.

'Tis not decent to inſiſt on thoſe ſcandalous Exceſſes, before ſuch a great and generous Audience.

Leaving therefore theſe Blemiſhes, I ſhall crave leave to remind you,

What are the Reaſons of this Days Solemnity: Or, in the Language of my Text, of your *Eating* and *Drinking* together on this Day. III.

Now the Deſign of this Day's Solemnity is plainly *Twofold.*

First, *To maintain Friendſhip.* I.
Secondly, *To promote Charity.* II.

First, The firſt Deſign of your preſent Meeting is, *to maintain and improve your Friendſhip.* I.

A moſt Noble and truly Generous Deſign: Since a true and well-regulated Friend-

Friendſhip, is not only the greateſt Pleaſure and Satisfaction to your own Breaſts; but alſo is of equal Benefit and Advantage to others.

Now the ſociable Life of Friends, or the mutual Converſation of Wiſe and Vertuous Perſons, is of great Advantage in ſeveral Reſpects.

1. *By improving our Underſtandings, and rectifying our Judgments.*

2. *By regulating and compoſing of our Paſſions.*

3. *By aſſiſting of us in our uſeful Deſigns, and the relieving of us in our Wants.*

1. Friendſhip doth improve our *Underſtandings*, and rectifie our *Judgments*.

Prov. 27. 17. *Iron ſharpeneth Iron, ſo a Man ſharpeneth the Countenance of his Friend. i. e.* As Iron is ſharpened and brightened by Iron; ſo one Man's Parts are raiſed and improved by anothers.

Hence 'tis obſerved, That a Friendly Converſation, where Men communicate their

their Notions with freedom, is of much greater Advantage to true and uſeful Knowledge, than either Reading or Meditation.

I grant indeed that both Reading and Meditation are neceſſary; and 'tis as vain to pretend to Learning without them, as it is to build without a Foundation. But that which I deſign ſhall be expreſſed in the words of the Great Lord *Verulam*: *Reading* may make a full and copious Man, and *Meditation* a profound Man; but 'tis *Diſcourſe* that makes a clear, diſtinct and uſeful Man.

In Confirmation of this 'tis obſerved, That ſeveral Perſons have been highly accompliſh'd in moſt parts of Converſation, and have been very uſeful to the Publick, without any great ſhare of Bookiſh Learning.

Which I do not mention with the leaſt Deſign to diſcourage true Learning; but to rectifie and improve it. For Reading without Diſcourſe, is like Eating without Digeſtion; which only loads the Body,

obſtructs the Paſſages, and impairs the ſtate of Health inſtead of advancing it.

Now that which Digeſtion is to the Body, Diſcourſe is to the Mind. By which word, I do not only mean private Diſcourſe with a Man's own Thoughts, which we call Meditation or Thinking, (a moſt pleaſing as well as profitable kind of Diſcourſe): But by Diſcourſe, I denote *external* Diſcourſe; expreſſed by outward Converſation with others.

By this Converſation we open our Breaſts, unfold our Notions, bring them out into the Light, to be conſidered and examined by others: Which is a moſt prudent and modeſt Practice.

For we are all of us too apt to think well of our ſelves, and have a ſtrange fondneſs for the Iſſue of our own Brain.

But when our Projects are brought to light, and communicated to others, then the Sagacity and Faithfulneſs of a Friend, diſcovers and rectifies our Errors and Miſtakes.

2. Another

2. Another Advantage of Friendſhip is *the regulating and compoſing of our Paſſions.* The tumults and diſorders of which Paſſions are the cauſe of all our Miſery; as being the chief Ingredients of our Sorrows, both in this World and in the next.

The Frenzy of *Anger*, the Feaver of *Love*, the Conſumption of *Envy*, the Aguiſh Viciſſitudes of *Hopes* and *Fears*, are the noted Diſeaſes and Diſtempers of our Mind.

Now by opening our Breaſts with freedom to our Friend, and by giving vent to our Paſſions, we aſſiſt his charitable Inclinations to rectifie theſe Diſorders. For when he knows our State and our Circumſtances, he will then by his friendly Advice compoſe our *Anger*, direct our *Love*, correct our *Envy*, regulate our *Hopes*, and divert our *Fears*.

3. Friendſhip doth aſſiſt us in our uſeful Deſigns, and relieves our Defects.

I doubt not but you are all fully convinced, that you were not ſent into this

World only to pleaſe your ſelves, and to gratifie your own ſenſual Inclinations; but that it is your Duty, in all your Actions, to glorifie God, and do Good to others.

Eſpecially you that are Gentlemen, whom God hath entruſted with the Talents of Authority and Eſtates beyond and above other Men, you I ſay, are more eſpecially obliged to be faithful to this your Truſt, by laying out your Eſtates, and uſing your Power in ſuch a manner, as may make you even a Bleſſing to the Age you live in.

But when you come *ad practicandum*, and project any particular Advantage, either to the Neighbourhood or the World; then, from the Envy or Deſigns of others, you ſhall quickly encounter ſuch Oppoſition, as will convince you of your Weakneſs, and how neceſſary it is to call in the Help of others to ſupply your own Defects.

From hence the neceſſity of Friendſhip is undeniably eſtabliſhed. For on ſuch an Occa-

Occaſion, a Stranger is not proper to be conſulted, who may not know the whole State of your Buſineſs, nor the *Series* and Circumſtances of your Affairs. Much leſs is an Enemy to be truſted; who will only betray you, and undermine your Deſigns.

But the aſſiſtance of a faithful prudent Friend, will effectually ſupport you, in all your Difficulties, and in all your Wants.

I might add much more of the Nature and Excellency of Friendſhip, by repreſenting, that it is the chief Ingredient of our Happineſs in Heaven, where the Bleſſed Angels, and Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, by their mutual Converſation, enjoy the Perfection of Friendſhip to all Eternity.

But this is too noble a Theme for any Humane Expreſſion. This Heavenly Friendſhip is beſt explained by being practiſed. And God grant that *your* Generous Inclinations may make the Experiment.

Do

Do you begin and continue a true Chriſtian Friendſhip in this World; and through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, it ſhall be compleated in the next.

I am now addreſſing my ſelf to Gentlemen, who have this Obligation to Friendſhip amongſt others, that they are *Country-Men.* Either born in, or Inhabitants of the ſame County.

A County, which is not only one of the Largeſt, but alſo one of the Richeſt and moſt Flouriſhing Counties of the whole Kingdom. And that whether you conſider the Fruitfulneſs of the Soil, the Number and Diſpoſition of the *I*nhabitants, and the Priviledges you enjoy.

The Fruitfulneſs of the Soil doth appear in the Riches of the *I*nhabitants; ſince one of your Yeomans doth rival the Gentry of other Counties.

The Diſpoſition of the Inhabitants is thus deſcribed by *Malmsburienſis*, an ancient Writer: *The Country-People, and the Town-Dwellers of* Kent, *retain the Spirit of*

that

that ancient Nobility, above the reſt of the Engliſh; being more ready to afford a Reſpect and kind Entertainment to others, and leſs inclinable to revenge Injuries.

Their not revenging of Injuries is an evident Proof of their Courage. Which is thus confirmed by *John* of *Salisbury* in his *Polycraticon.*

As a Reward (ſaith he) *of that ſignal Courage which our* Kent *with great eagerneſs and ſteadineſs ſhewed againſt the* Danes, *they do to this Day lay claim to the Honour of the firſt Ranks, and the firſt Onſet in all Engagements.*

But omitting other Inſtances, I ſhall only remind you of the Courage and Bravery of your Anceſtors, when *William* Duke of *Normandy* invaded *England.*

The Duke (for *I* will not call him your Conqueror) after the famous Battle near *Haſtings*, (where King *Harold* was ſlain) immediately began his March towards *London*: And entring into the *Weald*, or Woody Part of *Kent*, and advancing with his Vanguard before the reſt of his Army, he

he found himſelf almoſt environed with mighty Numbers of the *Kentiſh Men*, who had concealed themſelves in the Wood, by carrying every Man a great Bough of a Tree, like a Shield in his Hand.

But when they ſaw the *Norman Troops*, and the Duke at the Head of them, within their Danger, they began on a ſudden to march like a moving Wood; till approaching their Enemies, they threw down their Boughs, and diſcovered on all ſides a Multitude of brave armed Men, ready to charge the *Normans*, that ſtood ſurprized and amazed at the ſtrangeneſs of the Sight; which appeared as if a Wood had been, by ſome Enchantment, transformed into an Army.

But the *Kentiſh-Men* approaching, to ſhew that they had Conduct as well as Valour, made a Halt; and ſent the Abbot of St. *Auſtins* to tell the Duke, that all the Men of that Province were there aſſembled to defend their Country and their Liberties; or, to ſell their Lives as dear as they could. But if he would ſwear to

preſerve

preſerve them in thoſe ancient Laws and Cuſtoms, under which they and their Anceſtors had ſo long lived, they were then all ready to lay down their Arms, and become his Subjects. If not; he muſt prepare to fight with Men that had reſolved to loſe their Lives, rather than their Liberties and Laws.

The Duke finding he was too far advanced to joyn the Body of his Army before he engaged, and unwilling to venture all his Hopes and Fortunes, againſt ſuch numerous Bands of deſperate Men, of ſuch Courage and Reſolution as theſe appeared to be; He granted to all the Inhabitants of the Province of *Kent*, the Preſervation and free Enjoyment of all their ancient Laws and Cuſtoms under the *Saxon* Reigns. He ſwore the Obſervance of his Grant, received their Homage, and ſo purſued his March.

Thus I have preſumed to be your Hiſtorian as well as your Preacher, in giving this ſhort Account of thoſe Green Boughs, which this Day are carried before you:

as Lawrels and Trophies of your Anceſtors Victory, and your Liberties.

And may theſe Boughs be ever Green. May theſe your Lawrels ſtill flouriſh. And may you, Worthy Gentlemen, ſtill continue what you are: Firm to your Religion, the Religion of the Church of *England*, Loyal to your King, and an Ornament to your Country.

And having done this Right to your Worth and County; Give me leave now to be your humble Remembrancer of another Deſign of this Day's Solemnity: *viz.*

II. Secondly, *To promote Charity.*

Which I ſhall at preſent commend to your Practice only from theſe Two Topicks.

1. *Charity is the beſt and ſureſt Expedient to preſerve your Eſtates in this Life.*

2. *You have a comfortable aſſurance, that your Charity ſhall be rewarded in the Life to come.*

1. *Cha-*

Charity is the beſt Expedient to preſerve your Eſtates.

When you purchaſe an Eſtate, your firſt Concern is to find out a good Title; and then you are no leſs ſollicitous to convey that Title firmly, to you and your Heirs for ever.

But let me with freedom tell you, That Charity is your beſt Tenure; and will continue a Name, and perpetuate a Family more firmly, than all your *Fines*, and *Vouchers*, and *Entails* (thoſe clenching Nails of the Law) can pretend to. For alas! How ſlight a Title is a Legal Right? How ſlender Security is the firmeſt Conveyance againſt deſtructive Caſualties?

Will you charm a Thief with Paper and Parchment? Or, will it ſtop the devouring Flames to tell them, that you have an unqueſtionable *Deed of Sale*; and that this Houſe which they are now ready to conſume, is ſettled upon *you* and your *Heirs* for ever?

Will an aſtoniſhing Earthquake, when God gives it a Commiſſion to ſwallow up,

be fixed and firm at the Pleadings of your Learned Council?

Will the Winds grow calm, and the Sea huſh and be ſtill; or a Roving Pirate ceaſe his Purſuit, becauſe the Ship and its Cargoe are the Property of its Owners?

Do not theſe and ſuch like Inſtances, effectually convince you, That *God's Providence is your beſt Inſurance*? Can any Power leſs than his preſerve you, from that Violence and Treachery, thoſe Calamities and Dangers, with which your Wealth is ſurrounded?

Think ſeriouſly upon it, and *you* will then confeſs, It is *your* Intereſt as well as Duty, by Acts of Charity to ſecure the Divine Protection, which alone is able to preſerve *your* Eſtates. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preſerve him, and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the Will of his Enemies.*

Pſal. 41. 1, 2.

2. The

2. The higheſt and moſt preſſing Motive to Charity, *is the comfortable Aſſurance, that it ſhall be rewarded in the Life to come.*

As preparatory to *your* Conviction I muſt remind *you*, That *you* are frail and mortal as well as others.

Which I ſhall expreſs in the words of the Learned and Pious Dr. *Iſaac Barrow*. And I do deſignedly repeat his words at this time, becauſe by the Mothers ſide, this Eminent Man was of your County. His Words are theſe: "After a very "ſhort time *your* Thread will be ſpun out; "and then *you* ſhall be rifled and quite "ſtript of all; *you* ſhall *be laid out* ſtark "naked, as when *you* came into the "World. *You* ſhall not carry with *you* "one grain of *your* gliſtering Metals, nor "one rag of *your* gaudy Stuff. *Your* ſtate-"ly Houſes, *your* fine Gardens, and *your* "ſpacious Walks, muſt all be exchanged "for a cloſe Hole under Ground. *You* "muſt for ever bid farewel to *your* Pomps "and Magnificences; to *your* Feaſts and "Jollities; to *your* Sports and Paſtimes.

V. Barrow's *Bounty to the Poor*, p. 160.

"Not

" Not one of all *your* numerous and ſplen-
" did Retinue; no Companion of *your*
" Pleaſures, no Admirer of *your* Fortune,
" no Flatterer of *your* Vices can wait up-
" on *you*: But deſolate and unattended,
" *you* muſt go down into the Chambers of
" Darkneſs. Thus that Learned Perſon.

Being thus convinced that *you* muſt certainly Dye; the next Thought is to conſider, (and it is a weighty Thought) Whither are *you* going when *you* leave this World? Into what unknown Regions is *your* next remove?

And then, ſince Perſons of *your* Figure do love to be well treated, 'tis methodical to inquire; What kind of Entertainment are *you* then to expect? What Preparations have *you* made for *your* Reception there?

Perſons of Honour and Quality, in their Progreſs or their Journey, do give Notice of their approach to ſuch or ſuch a Place, and ſend their Harbingers before to make Proviſion for them; that ſo they may be received with Decency, and according to their Quality. Let

Let us now examine, Whether *you* are as wiſe for the Life to come, as *you* are for this.

We are all Strangers in this World, and *have here no continuing City*; but as Pilgrims and Sojourners are Travelling to *a better Country*. Now thoſe who Travel into Foreign Parts, do either ſend ſome Effects before them, or elſe do carry along with them *Bills* of *Credit*, which they take up in the Coin or Commodities of thoſe Countries, as they have occaſion.

Indeed in this World, *Money anſwereth all things*. But there is ſomething elſe which *anſwereth all things* in the next: *viz.* Alms and Charitable Diſtributions.

Theſe are your Exchange for the other World, and the *Bills* and Effects you are to ſend before you. Theſe (in the Traders Language) are ſuch Bills, as *will certainly be accepted*. Or (in Scripture Phraſe) *ſhall be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the Juſt*.

By thus giving Alms, you *provide your ſelves Bags which wax not old; a Treaſure in the Heavens that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth,* Luke 12.33.

approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth. By this faithful usage of the *Mammon of Unrighteousness, you make your selves Friends, that when ye fail* (when ye Dye, when you leave your Houses, and your Lands behind you) *will receive you* (will cause you to be received) *into Everlasting Habitations* Which God grant to us All.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, but One Glorious God, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Power, and Praise, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

FINIS.